



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3690

AUG 25 2004

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:

R-19J

Honorable Philip Crane
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-1508

Dear Congressman Crane:

Thank you for your letter dated July 28, 2004, regarding the Wauconda Sand and Gravel Superfund Site in Wauconda, Illinois. Administrator Mike Leavitt has asked me to respond to your letter on his behalf to inform you of the activities underway.

We recognize your concern on behalf of your constituents and agree that addressing the issue of vinyl chloride contaminated residential wells in the Wauconda area is a high priority. We initially became aware of the problem when the Lake County Health Department informed us of the sampling results of residential drinking water wells in the Hillcrest Subdivision in October 2003. Immediately, we contacted the Wauconda Task Group, Respondents to a CERCLA Unilateral Administrative Order, to develop a plan to investigate and respond to the vinyl chloride contamination in the wells. The Wauconda Task Group was then required to conduct additional sampling and has continued to re-sample affected wells and has been providing bottled water to all residences with levels of vinyl chloride at 1 part per billion (ppb) or greater, until a long term remedy to this situation can be developed. The EPA standard for safe drinking water is 2 parts per billion (ppb).

We consider communication to the public a very important part of the Superfund response process. Our efforts to communicate to the public about the work being done has included press interviews with the local newspapers, participating in public meetings with concerned residents of the Wauconda area, conducting extensive community interviews, and participating in meetings to form a Community Advisory Group (CAG). We have been working with the CAG to form an organizational committee, currently comprised of 12 citizens. This committee will establish the CAG's goals and objectives and will become an important communications link with the Wauconda community. Further meetings will be held to provide for regular face to face meetings with the community.

We are firmly committed to performing further investigations and developing a permanent resolution to address the residential well contamination in the Wauconda community. We look forward to resolving the water quality issues in the Wauconda area and would be pleased to brief you on our efforts in more detail at your convenience. Your interest in this site is greatly appreciated, and if I can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Very truly yours,
/s/ original signed by
Bharat Mathur

(M.G.)

Bharat Mathur
Acting Regional Administrator